

Açaí and Asthma



Hugo Rodier, M.D.

Asthma is an inflammatory condition that affects the lining cells of the bronchioles, or tubes that take air to the lungs.

The same inflammation that irritates the lining of arteries and intestines also affects the bronchial lining. This is why measuring exhaled Nitric Oxide, or NO, a marker of inflammation usually associated with arterial inflammation, can be used to measure how inflamed our bronchioles are in the treatment of asthma.

Cell membranes throughout our body become more brittle and irritated because cell membranes suffer from "TOIL:" they become Toxic, Oxidized, Inflamed, and Lacking in energy. Our "terrain," like the lining cells of the bronchioles, is then fertile ground for disease to take root. Poor diets lack micronutrients necessary to maintain healthy cell membranes, like antioxidants and anti-inflammatory nutrients. These diets also lead to poor detoxification, which adds to "terrain TOILING."

In other words, polluted air, which is often associated with asthma, is only a problem in people whose bronchioles are already inflamed and oxidized from poor diets. Air pollution is more likely to cause problems in individuals who do not have as much antioxidant activity in the tissues lining the lungs and sinuses.

Polluted air can also compromise our ability to detoxify pollutants in general, thereby further compromising our immune system through liver dysfunction. If the liver is asked to work overtime to rid the body of xenobiotics, it loses the nutrients it needs to detoxify,

such as Vitamin C. One cigarette burns up 50 mg of Vitamin C, which is the RDA. Lacking Vitamin C can lead to other disorders of inflammation and oxidation, not only in the lungs, but throughout the body. This can happen even to people who don't smoke, since breathing polluted air is much like smoking.

If our immune system, which is mostly in the G.I. tract, were to be functioning on all 8 cylinders, most respiratory problems would be overcome or improved. It is no coincidence that a significant number of people with asthma also have acid reflux disease and intestinal problems.

Since antibiotics also kill "innocent bystanders," or healthy intestinal organisms, antibiotics have been associated with a higher risk of developing asthma when used in children under one year of age. Also, bronchioles may be inflamed/oxidized from past infections that our body, lacking proper nutrition, could not optimally overcome. This can leave the bronchioles somewhat scarred and over-reactive.



Dr. Rodier brings a unique perspective to traditional medicine through extensive research (surveying 150 medical journals each month), teaching (University of Utah, School of Medicine, College of Health, and Department of Nutrition), and active clinical practice (working with a variety of chronic conditions).

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Açaí Fruit

The açaí fruit (pronounced AH-sigh-EE) has a long history of use in South America. The purple, berry-like fruit is roughly the size of a small grape and grows on palm trees common to the Amazon and other areas of South America. Locals have used all parts of the palm for hundreds of years. Researchers noted that the fruit was much sought after by young and old of all economic classes for its strength and energy promoting properties.

The berry provides a remarkable source of healthy fats, complete protein and essential vitamins and minerals. The açaí may also offer substantial protection against free radical damage. The fruit offers an excellent array of phytonutrients to protect against free radical damage, slow aging, fight disease and promote optimal health. Açaí can make a significant difference in overall health and quality of life.



The brain is also involved in asthma; tighter muscles from stress also cause the bronchiolar muscles to go into spasms, triggering asthma attacks. The more undernourished we are, the less efficient our stress-coping mechanisms are.



The answer is clear: eat well, get off refined foods and your lung health will improve. Since too many people will not heed this simple advice, supplementing with highly nutritional foods like the an açaí

blend makes a lot of sense. An açaí blend, may consist of açaí berry, pomegranate, lycium berry, grape, cranberry, bilberry, and other berries and fruits. Historically, the açaí berry, the main ingredient in a blend, has been used for many ailments with significant positive results, probably because of its high antioxidant content. It is estimated that açaí berries have 10 times more antioxidants than red grapes, and 10-30 times more anthocyanins than red wine. An açaí berry blend also has significant amounts of other nutritionally important elements such as Vitamin C, essential amino acids and monounsaturated oils, fiber and boron.

These antioxidants and micronutrients in an açaí blend are how TOILING cell membranes repair themselves, particularly the TOILING bronchial lining. Açaí in combination improves the Nitric Oxide Synthase pathway of inflammation, making the arteries less inflamed and oxidized. The high amino acid content of an açaí blend is also helpful in asthma. L-Arginine improves inflammation/oxidation of the bronchioles. Supplementing it helps reduce bronchospasms that lead to asthma. Açaí in combination with other fruits may also decrease homocysteine—an inflammatory, oxidating toxin produced by a lack of nutrients, which increases terrain toiling—while improving detoxification pathways. All the nutrients in an açaí blend promote healthy metabolism in cells, thus increasing the energy available for bronchial lining cells to carry out their function.

By improving the health of our intestines, açaí blends may help increase the levels of Short Chain Fatty Acids, SCFA, which are indispensable to the health of cell membranes lining our bronchioles. Healthy intestinal organisms promote lung health, and improve immune system function, thus lowering inflammatory markers.

The Bottom Line: *The micronutrients in an açaí blend reduce cell membrane TOILING, improve energy in cells, cell communication, detoxification and blood flow. They may also reduce bronchial spasms, reduce the damage caused by stress, and may aid in the healing process of the immune system in the intestines. All these actions lead to better lung health.*

Serving Recommendation✓

Açaí is a superfood. It is not to be taken in "doses," as you would a drug. Like any food, you may enjoy it as much as you like, in servings that you tolerate. Consume the açaí juice on an empty stomach, or at least a few minutes before consuming solid foods.

As a general rule, the more nutrition one needs, the more one should consume a food such as the açaí berry. The açaí berry in particular, will avail you of higher micronutrients to promote healing and optimize arterial health. A good starting point is to drink between two and four ounces a day.

Açaí in the News✓

Nicholas Perricone, M.D. said, "[The açaí] berry is one of the most nutritious and powerful foods in the world...nature's perfect energy fruit!" This fruit has been discussed on Oprah, NBC's Today Show, and on Steve O'Brien's CBS-FM New York radio show. In addition to its inclusion in several nutritional supplements, the little fruit from the Amazon has even made its way into a fruit smoothie available from the popular national chain, Jamba Juice.